

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, November 20, 2008, 7 p.m.

ARC, 1701 W. Ash

MINUTES

Commission Present: Terry Kloeppe, Bill Pauls, Dan Devine, Dennis Knudson, Gary Kespohl, Sue Davis

Staff Present: Mike Hood, Mike Griggs, Tammy Miller

Kloeppe called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. He welcomed the new member to the Commission, Sue Davis.

Agenda: The agenda was approved on a motion by Pauls, seconded by Devine.

Minutes: The minutes were approved on a motion by Kespohl, seconded by Devine.

Monthly Report: Kloeppe asked about the ranger responding to police calls at the parks, and if the number reported is an increase? The report shows that the Ranger responded to 32 percent of calls in the parks.

Griggs explained that staff is just starting to collect that data, in an effort to note the effectiveness of the Park Ranger program.

Kespohl expressed concern about the scholarship funds and not being able to serve the number of people who apply for the program; never catching up with past applications.

Hood replied that money in the scholarship fund has been turned back in the past. The amount spent fluctuates from year to year.

Kespohl asked if all applications were fulfilled?

Hood said that it depended if the application met two criteria: must be within city limits and must meet financial criteria. The department uses the school's free and reduced lunch program as criteria. Those applications are approved.

The October monthly report was approved on a motion by Kespohl, seconded by Pauls.

Rezoning: Anderson tract

Griggs explained the location of the property off of I-70 and Strawn Road. This is a voluntary annexation; we are purchasing the land for a future park, Griggs said. The land will be used to provide access to a new Perche Creek Trail that would run under I-70 and link to Cosmo Park. There is another piece of land next to the wastewater treatment plant which will be transferred from Public Works to Parks and Recreation, pending Council approval.

Pauls made a motion, seconded by Kespohl to recommend to City Council that they see no potential adverse impact to parks or trails from the proposed rezoning.

All in favor: Kloeppe, Pauls, Devine, Knudson, Kespohl, Davis

Motion carried.

Visioning Implementation Plan

Hood updated the Commission on the City's visioning plan. A consultant has been hired to write the implementation plan and each department is completing a questionnaire to help with the plan.

The visioning committee is looking for volunteers to take the lead on the implementation, Hood said, so the Commission may be interested in getting involved. There may be specific issues in the future

and staff will keep the commission informed.

Hood said the goals that have been drafted for the Parks and Recreation area seem broad. Many of the goals are being accomplished already through the Master Plan. Hood added he felt it was important to stress that the department was doing as much as it could with the given resources, and that if more is asked of the department, then more resources may need to be allocated.

Fees and Charges Study

Hood updated the Commission on fees and charges, and staffing studies being completed by PROS Consulting. The draft of the fees and charges study is complete, and Hood shared some of the findings with the Commission. The staffing study is not quite ready.

In the difficult budget times, revenue and cost recovery goals are becoming more critical. The study includes a review of those goals as well as a review of the fees. These findings will be used when considering the budget for FY' 10.

Hood said the Council will hear a presentation by the consultant at a work session on December 8. Kloeppel asked about one of the recommendations, raising fees. He asked if it is more desirable to raise fees slightly every year, or raise them more less frequently?

Hood replied that it depended on the community's perspective. Usually for the ARC and the golf courses, smaller increments are more palatable.

Devine asked if the increased number of golf passes will be taken into account? He wondered if raising green fees would be the right thing to do with the economy worsening and if there was a plan to discuss adjusting services.

Hood answered that there is no plan now, but that will be more of an important topic to discuss as we move forward. He commented that there is a pyramid effect...as fees are increased, services are usually expected to increase as well.

Kespohl said that he was concerned about cost recovery in adult and youth sports.

Hood remarked that we could increase fees to meet goals but there is a risk of alienating participants so that there would actually be a decrease in revenue.

MPRA Conference

Hood mentioned that the MPRA Conference will be March 10-13 in Kansas City. This is the 50th anniversary year. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

Council Items

Hood shared these updates:

Eastport Neighborhood Park—Council has authorized construction to begin in the spring.

Rock Quarry Park improvements—As part of the park's master plan, two asphalt tennis courts and two basketball courts will be constructed in the spring.

Cascades Neighborhood Park—At the Dec. 1 Council meeting, a public hearing will be held regarding the plan for this park.

Smiley Lane Neighborhood Park—This will be north of the Vanderveen subdivision. A cul-de-sac will need to be constructed at the end of Jackal Drive.

Devine asked if there would be parking there?

Griggs said no there would not.

Capital Projects

Griggs shared these updates:

Blue Ridge Elementary new playground: has been installed.

PMC Improvements: framework is going in for the new greenhouse.

Douglass Pool: repairs are being made to the ceiling of the pump room

Atkins: the lot is being paved, curbs being installed, walkways being constructed, scoreboard and bleacher pad for the Black Field have been installed, and the lights have been installed. The lights at Atkins cause no “spill over” and are programmable through the web.

Kloppel asked if these lights would replace those at other athletic fields?

Griggs said yes, the existing poles would work and the new type of lights would be installed as older lights need to be replaced.

Lake of the Woods: The restroom is operational and fencing has been completed.

Rainbow: New pitching machines have been installed.

Commission Comments

Pauls asked about the flags on the trail section of Bear Creek through Vanderveen and the status of it?

Hood said would take place in the next construction season.

Pauls complimented staff on the repairs to the Bear Creek Trail.

Kespohl stated he had concerns about the recent shooting at Douglass Park. He asked if the Commission ought to consider enforcing a curfew at the park?

Hood said if the Commission wanted to go in that direction, he would recommend that they communicate with the City Council and then get the directive to pursue that. The Commission could state that they are interested in exploring the idea. Hood added that staff is considering installing security cameras at the park so that may happen.

Kloppel asked about an upcoming meeting at the Armory regarding the park.

Griggs said yes, one was planned to discuss the proposed improvements at the park, including a spraygrounds feature and ballfield repairs.

Kespohl added that it seemed that the Armory is a site for troublesome behavior too.

Hood said that there are cameras throughout the Armory to help catch those behaviors and prevent them. He said that there are many positive activities happening there for youth.

Kespohl commented that he really felt some type of action was needed for Douglass Park.

Hood said there are numerous positive activities that go on at the park throughout the year, including the pool, Douglass Baseball, special events and Moonlight Hoops. He said it is difficult to balance providing those types of activities against the negative ones.

Kespohl asked the best way to proceed?

Hood said the Commission could take official action or just talk to their Council representatives informally as individuals.

Pauls said he would prefer to take the informal route to get an idea of how the Council people would feel about a park curfew, then maybe leading to a public hearing.

Devine commented that if you install a curfew in just that park, it may lead to problems somewhere else. He said he thought the recent criminal activity was a community problem, not a park problem.

Kloppel said he would feel more comfortable at this point speaking to Council members individually and getting a feeling at that point of how to proceed.

Hood mentioned that the crime at Douglass Park seems to come in cycles. Over the years, there have been times of trouble, then it seems to get better. Right now, it seems to be at a low point. He said the department’s philosophy is the more positive activities held there, the more the “bad” element will not be in the park and will go elsewhere. The idea of placing cameras in the park may be a deterrent as well. Some of the cameras would be portable and would be able to be moved as needed. Others would be fixated.

Griggs added that the cameras would be web-based, which would allow police to retrieve video images and data instantly from the cameras, if needed.

Staff Comments

Hood mentioned that as per tradition, the December meeting would likely be cancelled unless a business matter comes up that needs the Commission's attention. A notification will be sent closer to the meeting date.

Public Comments

None.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.